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Agenda Item: 9C
Meeting Date: June 15, 2006

CALIFORNIA BAY-DELTA AUTHORITY

BAY-DELTA CONSERVATION PLAN UPDATE

Summary: The development of the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan, a voluntary mechanism to comply with the Federal Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act called for in the CALFED 10-Year Action Plan, is now underway.

Recommended Action: This is an information item only.

In the CALFED 10-Year Action Plan, one of the key actions to be implemented over the next three to four years is the development of the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The BDCP is being explored as a voluntary new way for Bay-Delta system water users, who must comply with the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and California Endangered Species Act (CESA), to work cooperatively to attain incidental take coverage via a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP).

The first step in this process is the negotiation of an agreement to identify which water users are interested in securing coverage and which activities they would like to have covered. A steering committee is currently working on such an agreement. The agencies involved hope to complete the agreement by fall 2006.

In addition to identifying water users and activities, the agreement will describe covered species and the geographic scope needed to encompass the range of the covered species. The current plan is to address the water management activities related to the storage and diversion of water by water and power users who voluntarily participate. Coverage would likely be sought for fish and wildlife species found directly in the water and adjacent riparian areas that are directly impacted by the covered activities. The agreement is not intended to cover every type of activity that could impact the species being considered but will strike a balance between the need to be inclusive, the need to be decisive, and the need to complete the BDCP on schedule.

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As the agreement is being developed, work will also begin on the preparation of the BDCP components. These efforts are being coordinated with the Delta Vision Process and the End of Stage 1 Decisions. The BDCP will include a science-advisor process that will be closely coordinated with the activities of the CALFED Science Program. Current plans are to have substantial progress made on the BDCP by the end of 2007.

List of Attachments

None

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